



Congressional Hispanic Caucus

109th Congress Congresswoman Grace Flores Napolitano, Chair

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Contact: Imelda Aguirre

(202) 225-2410

Hispanic Caucus Concerned Over Roberts Nomination As Chief Justice

Nominee's attitude toward minority rights raises red flag

Washington, DC -- In response to President Bush's announcement that he will nominate John D. Roberts to serve as Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) expressed concern about the nominee's attitude towards minority rights and urged a closer analysis of Roberts' record. The CHC also restated its call for President Bush to fill the Associate Justice vacancy on the Court with a qualified Hispanic dedicated to equal justice and a judicial system that is fair to the Latino community.

"President Bush's nomination of John G. Roberts to replace William Rehnquist as Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court raises the stakes and requires that we take a much closer and deliberative look at the record of the man who would be the nation's highest ranking judge," said Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, CHC Chair. "With two vacancies to fill now, including that of Chief Justice, President Bush has a rare opportunity to affect the course of our nation. We ask that he act conscientiously and with the best interest of all Americans in mind."

"Recent revelations from Judge Roberts' tenure in the Reagan administration have raised serious concerns about his attitude towards minorities," said Congressman Charlie Gonzalez, Chair of the CHC Civil Rights Task Force. "Records indicate that Mr. Roberts has displayed a lack of regard for the legitimate concerns of minorities and for policies designed to redress a history of discrimination. That coupled with some questionable comments demonstrate a lack of sensitivity and respect for minorities, which requires us to more closely scrutinize Judge Roberts' record to ensure that he is someone who we can count on to uphold the rights of all Americans."

"The historic role the Supreme Court has played in the lives of minorities in extending equal protections and rights requires that its Chief Justice value the role of the judiciary in protecting rights and expanding liberties," said Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez, Vice Chair of the CHC Civil Rights Task Force. "The President now has another opportunity to nominate a candidate to the U.S. Supreme Court who is committed to equal protection and due process, and who is

sensitive to the laws that have opened doors for Hispanics and all minorities in education, voting, and employment. I continue to hope that the President will accept the CHC's offer to work together to find a qualified Latino candidate to fill that vacancy."

Following established criteria, the CHC will examine all nominees for their record of commitment to equal justice and right of access to the courts, their support for Congress' constitutional authority to pass civil rights legislation, and their efforts in support of protecting immigrant rights, voting rights and political access for Latinos.

While the CHC's judicial nominee evaluation criteria were originally designed to help identify qualified Latinos to serve on federal courts, the CHC has decided to evaluate all nominees to the Supreme Court because of the enormous impact the Court's decisions have on the nation's growing Hispanic community.

Past Supreme Court rulings on the rights of immigrant workers, voting rights, affirmative action policies at colleges and universities, and bilingual education have had long-lasting and far-reaching affects on the lives of Latino families. Many of these rulings have been decided by one vote.

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The Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) is comprised of 21 members of Congress of Hispanic descent. Since 1976 the CHC has been addressing the needs of the Hispanic community in all areas of American life. For more information on the CHC call (202) 225-2410.

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